

To the most Reverend Fathers in God, William Lord Arcbbishop of Canterbury, Primate of all England and Metropolitan, and John Lord Archbishop of York Primate of England and Metropolitan.

MES. R.

Oft Reverend Fathers in God, We Greet you well. Whereas the bold abuses, and extravagancies of Preachers in the Pulpit, have not only by the experience of former Ages been found to tend to the Dilhonour of God, the Scandal of Religion, and Disturbance of the Reace, both of Ghurch and State, but did also (through the Licentiousness of the late Rebellioustimes) much increase, to the Inflaming, Fomenting, and Heightning of the fad Diftempers and Confusions that were then among us: And whereas even at this present (notwithstanding the merciful Providence of God, so figually manifested in Restoring Our Royal Family, and the Lawful Government of these Realms, and putting an end to the great Rebellion, and notwithstanding the pious care and endeavours of Our late Dear Brother, and Our Self ever fince, to Govern Our Realms in Peace and Tranquillity) it may justly be seared that in sundry parts of this Realm, there want not men of unquiet and Factious Spirits, who in stead of Preaching the pure Word of God, and building up the People in Faith and Holiness, will (if they be not restrained) make it a great part of their Business to beget in the minds of their Hearers, an evil Opinion of their Governours, by infinuating Fears and Jealousies, to Dispose them to Discontent, and to season them with such unfound and dangerous Principles as may lead them into Disobedience, Schism, and Rebellion: And whereas also fundry young Divines, and Preachers, either out of a Spirit of Contention and Contradiction, or in a vain oftentation of their Learning, take upon them in their Popular Sermons, to handle the deep Points of Gods Eternal Councils and Decrees, or to meddle with the Affairs of State

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and Government, or to wrangle about Forms and Gestures, and other fruitless Disputes and Controversies, serving rather to amuse than profit the Hearers; which is done for the most part, and with the greatest Considence, by such persons as least understand them: We out of Our Princely Care and Zeal for the Honour of God, the Advancement of Piety, Peace, and true Religion, and for the preventing for the suture, as much as lieth in Us, the many and great inconveniencies and mischiefs that will unavoidably ensue, if a timely stop be not given to these and the like growing Abuses, Do, according to the Examples of several of Our Predecessors of Blessed Memory, by these Our special Letters, straitly Charge and Command you, to use your utmost Care and Diligence that these Directions, which upon long and serious Consideration, Our late Dear Brother thought good to give concerning Preachers, *

* Anno 1662. and which we upon like Confiderations have Approved, and caused to be Re-printed, and herewith sent unto you, be from henceforth duly and strictly observed by all the Bishops, and others concerned therein within your Provinces. And to this end our Will and Pleasure is, That you forthwith send them Copies of these our Directions, to be by them speedily Communicated to every Parson, Vicar, Curate, Lecturer, and Preacher in every Cathedral, Collegiate, and Parish-Church within their Diocesses: And that you earnessly Require them to imploy their utmost endeavour for the due Observation of the same, whereof We shall expect a strict account, both of you. and every one of them: And these our Letters shall be your sufficient Warrant, and Discharge in that behals.

Given at Our Court at Whitehall the fifth day of March 1685. In the second Year of Our Reign.

By His Majesties Command,

SUNDERLAND P.

Directions Concerning Preachers.

Hat no Preachers in their Sermons presume to meddle with Matters of State, to Model new Governments, or take upon them to Declare, Limit, or Bound out the Power and Authority of Sovereign Princes, or to State and Determine the Differences between Princes and the People; But that upon all good Occasions they faithfully Instruct the People in their Bounden Duty of Subjection and Obedience to their Governours, Superiour and Subsordinate of all sorts, and to the Established Laws according to the Word of God, and the Doctrine of the Church of England, as it is contained in the Homilies of Obedience, and the Articles of Keligion set forth by publick Authority.

II. That they be Admonished not to spend their Time and Study in the Search of Abstruse and Speculative Notions, especially in and about the deep Points of Election and Reprobation, together with the Incomprehensible manner of the Concurrence of Gods free Grace, and Mans free Will, and such other Controversies as depend thereupon: But howsoever that they presume not Positively, and Doctrinally to

determine any thing concerning the same.

It. That they forbear in their Sermons ordinarily and causelessly to enter upon the Handling of any other Controversies of less Moment and Dissiculty: But whensoever they are occasioned by Invitation from the Text they Preach upon, or that in Regard of the Auditory they Preach unto, it may seem Requisite or Expedient so to do; That in such cases they do it with all Modesty, Gravity, and Candour, afferting the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church of England, from the Cavils and Objections of such as are Adversaries to either, without Bitterness, Railing, Jearing, or other upnecessary or unseem-

ly provocation,

IV. That for the more Edifying of the People in Faith and Godlinels (the aforesaid abuses laid aside) all Ministers and Preachers in their several respective Cutes, shall not only diligently apply them. felves to Catechile the Younger fort, according as in the Book of Common Prayeris appointed , But also shall in their ordinary Sermons Infift chiefly upon Catecherical Doctrines (wherein are contained all the necessary and undoubted Verities of Christian Religion) declaring withal unto their Congregations what Influences such Do-Ctrines ought to have into their Lives and Conversations, and stirring them up Effectually, as well by their Examples as their Doctrines, to the practice of such Religious and Moral Duties, as are the proper Refults of the faid Doctrines, as Self.denial, Contempt of. the World, Humility, Patience, Meekness, Temperance, Justice, Mercy, Obedience, and the like; And to a Detestation and shunning of Sin, especially such Sins as are so rife among us, and common to the Age we Live in; fuch are those usually Stiled the Seven Deadly ones, in tho t, all kind of Debauchery, Senfuality, Rebellion, Profaneness, Atheism, and the like. And because the late Licentious Times have Corrupted Religion even in the very Roots and Foundations, That where there is an Afternoons Exercise, it be especially Spent either in Explaining some part of the Church-Catechism, or in Preaching upon some such Text of Scripture, as will properly and Naturally lead to the handling of some thing Contained in it, or may Con-A 2

duce to the Exposition of the Liturgy, and Prayers of the Church (as Occasion shall be offered) the onely cause They grewinto Contempt amongst the People being this, that They were not Understood. That also the Minister as often as Conveniently he can, Read the Prayers himself; and when he cannot so do, he Procure or Provide some sit Person in Holy Orders, who may do it with that Gravity, Distinctness, Devotion, and Reverence as becomes so Holy an Action: And whensoever by Reason of his Instrmity, or the Concurrence of other Offices, the time may seem too short, or he unable to Personn the Office of both Prayers and Sermon at length, he rather shorten his Discourse or Sermon, then Ommit any thing of the Prayers, less the socur the Penalty of the Act for Uniformity, Requiring them to be Read according as the Book Directs.

V. And further Our Will and Pleasure is, That All Ministers within their several Cures, be Injoyned publickly to Read over unto the People, such Canons as are or shall be in Force at least once, and the Thirty nine Articles twice every Year to the End they may the better understand, and be more throughly Acquainted with the Dostrine and Discipline of the Church of England, and not so easily drawn a-

way from it as formerly they have been.

VI. Since Preaching was not Anciently the Work of every Priest, but was Restrained to the choicest Persons for Gravity, Prudence, and Learning; The Archbish ps and Bishops of this Kingdom are to take great Care whom they Licence to Preach, and that all Grams and Licences of this kind heretofore made by any Chancessour, Official, Commissary or other Secular Person (who are presumed not to be so Competent Judges in Matters of this Nature) be accounted Void and Null, unless the same shall likewise be allowed by the Archbishop, or the Bishop of the Diocess, and that all Licences of Preachers hereaster to be made or Granted by any Archbishop or Bishop, shall be onely during Pleasure, otherwise to be Void to all Intents and Purposes, as

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with all their feveral Parillies and Congregations, carefully to look after all such Offences, that all such Offences, that all such Offences, that all such Offences, that all such Disorders may for the Time to come be Prevented.

Given at Our Court at Whitehall, the Fifth Day of March, 1685.

By His Majesties Command.
Sunderland. P.

Printed at LONDON: And Re-printed at EDINBURGH, by the Heir of Andrew Anderson, Printer to the KING'S most Excellent MAJESTY, Anno Dom. 16

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Type Laftly that for the better Oblerving of the Londs Day, too much neglected of late, they shall, as by often and ferious Admonitions and tharp Reproofs, endeavour to draw off People from such Idle, Debauched, and Profane Couries as dishenour God, bring a Scandal on Religion, and Contempt on the Laws and Authority Beclesiastical and Civil, so shall they very earnessly persuade them to frequent Divine Service on the Lords Day, and other Fostivals appointed by the Church to be kept Solemo; And in case any Persuade thall refore unto any Taverns of Aleshouses, or use my Persuade that Trefore unto any Taverns of Aleshouses, or use my Persuade and Exercises on such Days, the Minister shall reshort shifts which are in Authority in their several Parishes and Congregations, carefully to look after all such Offenders in any haid witationer, and those the

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